GOD IN HISTORY

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

GRADUATING CLASS

OF THE

COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

ON THE EVENING, MARCH 28, 1865,

BY

REV. JAMES WARLEY MILES

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE CLASS.

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"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation"—ACTS xvii. 26.

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STEAM-POWER PRESS OF EVANS & COGSWELL,

No. 3 Broad and 103 East Bay streets.

1863.

CHARLESTON, *March* 30, 1863.

DEAR SIR:

We are instructed by the Graduating Class to return to you their most hearty and entire thanks for the profound, eloquent, and exceedingly appropriate Discourse which you delivered before them on last Sunday evening, and to request a copy for publication. We feel, sir, that we would be doing injustice to the Class and to ourselves, did we not express, in an especial manner, our high appreciation of its unusual merit. We should be glad to be able to study at our leisure the deep truths which you so forcibly presented to our attention, and we should esteem it indeed a privilege to be instrumental in sending to every member of our young Republic its earnest words of warning and encouragement.

With the sincere hope that you will comply with the wish of the Class,

We remain, dear sir, with gratitude and esteem,

Your obedient servants,

JAMES BIRNIE,
F. P. HUGHES.
Committee.

To the Rev. JAMES W. MILES.

Messrs. BIRNIE AND HUGHES,

Committee of the Senior Class:

GENTLEMEN—I am at a loss how to thank you for the terms in which you have acknowledged the imperfect effort to discharge the duty which I felt honored in having assigned me by your Class. While I am deeply gratified that my discourse has met with your approbation, at the same time I am fully aware that its manifold deficiencies will be but too evident when it is subjected to the ordeal of publication. The discourse, however, in a manner, belongs to you, and I shall therefore place the manuscript at your disposal. If its publication should answer no other end, it will at least be a memorial of our friendship, and to me a gratifying memento of the manner in which you have been pleased to appreciate a sincere, though very inadequate, attempt to fulfil the trust which you reposed in me.

Believe me, with every feeling of friendship and respect,

Obediently yours,

J. W. MILES.

March 30, 1863.

DISCOURSE.

Could one take a purely objective view of the vast panorama of universal history as its varying events crowded across the field of vision, it would probably present a confused and tumultuary scene. Nation crowding upon nation — each working out its own national ends and existence, irrespective of others, or, where coming into conflict, conquering and being conquered—running a varied career, and disappearing from the scene — vast empires blooming and decaying apparently only for themselves, conflicting nationalities, new political combinations, the ever recurring round of growth, tumult, bloom, and decay — such would probably appear to be the general spectacle presented by the history of nations. But the contemplation of history as a congeries of events springing from the arbitrary acts of men, where the ambition of a conqueror, or the arts of a demagogue, or the subtlety of a politician, or the policy of a nation, or the combination of various external circumstances are alone assumed as the explanation of historical events, cannot satisfy those demands of the intellect which, by its very constitution, it is compelled to make when brought face to face with varied and seemingly incongruous phenomena. That law of the reason which seeks after unity, which strives to co-ordinate the boundless, and often apparently confused mass of physical

phenomena, and to refer them to harmonizing and in-forming law, is impelled to deal in the same manner with the facts of human history, and to seek in them, no less than in the grand marchings of the heavens, the manifestation of a rational and providential plan.

All phenomena indicate some underlying law which is manifesting and realizing itself through them. And so perfectly is this now established that every new class of phenomena, even those apparently the most arbitrary and irregular, set the investigator upon his search with the most absolute confidence that they are not fortuitous results of accident, but that they indicate the operation of inevitable law. The great physical phenomena of the universe naturally first pressed this conception upon the mind of man, and although, from the overwhelming variety of the aspects of nature, it was long before the conception assumed a clear and scientific form, yet the laws of the human mind responded to the suggestions of the external world; and in even the very oldest and crudest systems of philosophy there are traces of a dim consciousness of this supreme truth. But the perception of law without him would not fail to direct man's attention to the phenomena of his own intellectual and moral being, and to the investigation of those laws within him which ultimately led to scientific psychology and to the criticism of the reason. Man, however, stands not merely face to face with the stupendous phenomena of nature and with the marvellous laws of his own being, but from the very constitution of his nature his relations as a political creature to the state most prominently impressed him, and with political development and the growth of free states it was inevitable that he should be led to investigate the laws of those relations, and thus to lay the foundation of political

philosophy. With increasing experience that there is nothing which is not subject to law—with the ever deepening conviction that all phenomena—that the universe itself—are but the manifestation and embodiment of Supreme Thought, men came at length, necessarily, to seek in the varied, complicated, often seemingly conflicting phases of human history, for some general and fundamental laws which might harmonize the phenomena and explain the thought of which they were the exponent. And thus, instead of history being regarded as a collection of so many arbitrary and independent national episodes, connected only by the accidental bond of external contact, there was laid the foundation of a philosophy of history which seeks a true internal connection of law or thought, giving unity to and expressed by the manifestations of the history of nations.

What has been stated may be recapitulated in a single sentence. The constitution of the human mind impels it to investigate the laws of which the phenomena of the universe are the exponents: this is philosophy; and according to the classes of phenomena toward which the investigation is directed there necessarily arise sundry particular philosophies, as, for example, a philosophy of nature—a philosophy of mind—a philosophy of morals—a philosophy of politics—a philosophy of history. Having thus rapidly indicated the manner in which a philosophy of history arose, with which alone we are at present concerned, it would be natural, in the next place, to pass in review the various attempts which have been made by illustrious intellects to solve this interesting problem. This, however, time forbids us to do. All of the great minds, from Vico to Wilhelm von Humboldt, who have studied the problem have perceived and contributed some principles of truth

and value, but none has completely solved the problem in its full extent; and this, perhaps, it is impossible for a human intellect to achieve, for the following reason: in investigating the phenomena of nature there are but two elements with which we have to deal—the formative element, or the law, and the material or phenomenal element, through which we trace the law realizing itself. But, in the events of human history, the problem becomes vastly more complicated, from the fact that, while on the one hand man, as a free agent, bears himself the relation of a formative element, or law, to the events which he produces; on the other hand he is himself the material in relation to the higher providential law or thought, which, through him, is working out a determinate plan in history. In analyzing, therefore, the history of nations, with a view to tracing that providential plan, there will, probably, owing to the agency of an element with so many passions and motives as man, always remain a certain residuum which we cannot perfectly co-ordinate and explain. Nevertheless, some general principles have been arrived at, which serve as a clew to the great drama of history. To estimate aright the application of these principles, two facts must be borne in mind. The one is that, when we have reached a law of nature we must accept it as an ultimate fact for us, and not vainly speculate as to why the law is so and not otherwise. The other is that, through the variety of a given class of phenomena we can trace the manifestation of a general thought or archetypal idea, specialized in the individual phenomena of the class, and harmonizing them all in the unity of a plan. This has been found true in every domain of nature, and it does not fail in the case of man. From the very nature of the plan, these archetypal ideas cannot be fully realized in any one individual of a

class, but they are the thought or pattern developing itself through the entire class, while each individual of the class may be complete for itself, though exhibiting but one phase of that general plan upon which it is constructed. Although it requires long and laborious induction to arrive at a perception of the plan, yet, when it is once conceived, it sheds wonderful light, beauty, and unity upon all the various phenomena which it embraces. Applying these principles to the history of nations, we shall find that, while each individual nation may possess a history of its own, complete in itself, it yet exhibits but one phase of that general idea or plan which is realizing itself through the entire drama of universal history. As, for the sake of illustration, the archetypal idea of vertebrate animals involves all the various phases which that idea includes, and as, from these archetypal ideas being laws of God, they must be efficient, and therefore be necessarily realized, so, analogously, the archetypal idea of universal history must involve the necessary development, through the various phases of the life of nations, of all that is involved in the earthly destiny of man. His destiny in a future life is a matter which belongs to the relations of each individual to his God; but, as the destiny of man involves the realization of all that is included in the idea of man, our conception of the plan of universal history will depend upon our conception of what the idea of man involves in reference to his destiny or mission upon earth. But we cannot reach this idea by mere speculation, nor have we a right to assume it to be some *a priori* conception of our own. It must be deduced from close observation and reflection upon the facts exhibited in the civil, artistic, religious, and literary history of nations: since thus only can we perceive the goal toward which, by the intrinsic laws of his own na-

ture, man has been striving with more or less success. We need not suppose that every race or people has directly contributed something toward the higher advancement of civilization. This is certainly not the case. But every race and people have exhibited, unconsciously, some phase, or, even in very low forms, mere hints, of the general plan in which they were embraced. If we consider all races as distinguished by the broad classification of historical, or those who have developed a literature, and non-historical, or those who have had no literature, we find that while the latter, as exhibiting a phase of the idea of humanity, and in their dialects as supplying certain phases of the idea of language, have a place in the divine plan of man, they have, nevertheless, contributed nothing to civilization. Of the historical races, there appear to have been two primitive migrations from their original seats in central Asia—one of the Arians westward, of which we shall presently speak, and one, still earlier, eastward, of races now represented by the Indo-Chinese and Turanian peoples. These latter named branches, in their civilization and dialects, certainly enlarge our conception of the idea of man, and supply important links or stages of the development and formation of language—that marvellous implantation in humanity which unmistakably manifests the unity of an intelligent plan. But their civilization and dialects reached only certain permanent stages, and it was not their mission to unfold those ideas further in universal history. It is, however, in the great races which have successively carried on the progressive stream of civilization that we are naturally to look for the development of that idea of man which is being realized in the plan of human history.

The present occasion not permitting an extensive and critical induction from the various histories of nations, it

will only be possible to adduce some general illustration in support of the idea which we desire to present. These will be naturally drawn from those races with which we are ethnographically and philologically connected.

From the vast table-lands of central Asia issued those remarkable Arian migrations which have so powerfully influenced the course of history. As from that common fatherland, under the impulse of causes into which we need not now inquire, the various races in their migrations emerge into history, they bring with them certain indelible types and impresses which never become wholly obliterated, whatever may be the national changes and developments which each race experiences as it proceeds upon its divinely-appointed mission. And thus amid even the furthest wanderers, and amid their greatest vicissitudes, there will be found in their languages, their mythologies, their traditions, some memorials and lingering echoes of that distant, perchance, long forgotten home. These nations pursued two streams of emigration—the main stream always flowing toward the north-west, embracing the ancestors of the Celts, Greeks, Romans, Germans, Sclavonians; and the southern stream down the river valleys of India. The Hindu, although from the evidence of philology, probably the eldest brother of this great family of the Arian nations, was also probably the last to leave the original home. But as he halted in his career nearer to sunrise than his westward-emigrating brethren, we naturally turn first to consider the character which he has exhibited in his adopted home. Conquering and driving before him the rude tribes of the Indian peninsula, the Hindu, bounded by the ocean and the mighty mountains of the north, surrounded by nature in her vastest types of manifestation, abandoned himself to the realm of speculative thought, to the contem-

plation of the absolute, and meditation upon the eternal. We must bear in mind the fact that the conditions of physical geography have always an important influence upon national character and development, and, as though at once inspired and oppressed by the mighty phenomena of nature around him, the Hindu felt his earthly existence, his personality, but a transient illusion before that awful power which supported all, which alone was real being, and he expressed his conceptions in literary works of unrivalled magnitude. Religion and philosophy were the spheres in which his mental activity was absorbed, and he grappled with problems which have often been supposed to be of modern and western origin. Of Hindu origin, also, was Buddhism, the most extraordinary and widely extended religion ever excogitated by man, a movement toward religious freedom and a struggle of the soul for emancipation. It was a reforming protest against a corrupted Brahminism; it carried mildness and a degree of civilization to barbarous hordes; and, degenerate as it has become, it is to this day the cheerless hope of the largest portion of the human family.

The Hindu, from his contemplative character, was not fitted to perform a great rôle in the external history of the world; but in his intellectual and religious speculations he presents one of the most remarkable phases of the development of the human mind; and it can never be forgotten that to the olden treasures and mysteries of his sacred language is owing the foundation of the science of comparative philology, which has already accomplished so much in elucidating a part of the plan of Providence in the migrations and affiliations of the human family.

In the revolutions of the great western Asiatic empires; in the revolts of their subject nations to autonomy, as

under the Assyrian; in the combining of diverse nations into a universal polity without the obliteration of nationalties, as under the Persian; in the freer character of art, and in the incipient development of commerce, can be traced an obscure, unconscious movement of the human mind toward the ideas of freedom and of the community of humanity beyond what appears in the Hindu, although the idea of the essential freedom of the individual was not yet developed as a barrier to imperial despotism. The movement also of the religious idea in the Arian, as manifested in the ancient Persian, is very remarkable; and, without the profound speculative philosophy of the Hindu, the manner in which the Persian grappled with the problem of the Universe indicates a deeper moral than the Pantheism of India. "The highest trinity," as he calls it, of Zoroaster, "thought, word, deed," was more pregnant in its moral signification than those Indian dreams which, while stimulating the speculative, paralyzed the active powers of man.

If we pause for a moment to contemplate the remarkable civilization of Egypt, we discover beneath all its massive fixedness of type a real free movement of thought, a political and social advance, a profound sense of the personality of Deity, as distinguished from the all-absorbing Pantheism of the Hindu, and a sober and firm barrier against the wild orgiastic worships of the nations on their east, and the savagism of the uncultured tribes on their west and south. What impulse or elements toward the genera- progress of human civilization Egypt afforded to the peo[ple who came in contact with her can never be fully ascertained; but within her own sphere her mission was fulfilled with fidelity, and we reverently recognize the Divine Hand which appointed her to exemplify another phase of that

idea of humanity, the plan of which he is unfolding in the history of nations.

The part assigned in history to the Hebrew nation is known to all. The spirit of freedom moved in their national life, and, from the very constitution of their tribes, it would have been impossible for any Hebrew monarch to have consolidated the nation into a despotism like Persia or Assyria. In times of corruption, when priest and king were faithless to their mission, the divine fire ever burned in the breasts of their prophets; and this nation in whom was planted a profound sense of the relation of man to a revealed Creator and Judge, through the medium of Christianity, imparted this sacred deposit to the Gentiles.

But it is to the westward migrating branches of the great Arian family that the most conspicuous parts have been assigned. "They have been," says Max Müller (the most competent authority to pronounce upon the subject), "the prominent actors in the great drama of history, and have carried to their fullest growth all the elements of active life with which our nature is endowed . . . we learn from their literature and works of art the elements of science, the laws of art, and the principles of philosophy. In continual struggle with each other and with Semitic and Chamitic races these Arian nations have become the rulers of history, and it seems to be their mission to link all parts of the world together by the chains of civilization, commerce, and religion." This observation of the learned scholar suggests the remarkable, and often noticed fact, that the stream of humanity has always manifested its capacity for the development of higher civilization as it flowed westward from its Asiatic home—thus indicating a gradual unfolding of the divine plan or idea of man. Man is not merely one of a collection of individual human

beings, he is a member of the organic body of humanity; and, if history be not a mere illusive Hindu dream, there is as really a unity of life of humanity as there is of the individuals who compose it.

Of the races which emerged from the westward-emigrating Arians, the three most distinguished have been the Greeks, the Romans, and the Germanic nations; and it would appear that in proportion, not to the mere commingling, but to the thorough fusion of cognate stocks, giving birth to new and distinctive nationalities, has been developed the capacity for progress in civilization. Thus the Greek, the Roman, the modern German, and the English, while each presenting a distinct nationality, were each the ultimate product of the thorough fusion of various antecedent elements. The Greek when he appears upon the stage of history exhibits most marked contrasts to the Hindu, who preserved his blood unmixed as he brought it from his Arian fatherland. The one feeling his sense of personality absorbed in the infinite; the other the most individualized of human beings. The one awe-struck before the overwhelming vastness of the phenomena of nature; the other subduing nature to every human appliance, and catching from the inspiration of her beauty that matchless art whereby the touch of the Grecian chisel has made stone more precious than gold. The one taxing his imagination to embody in gigantic, unearthly, enigmatic forms his conceptions of the mysterious powers of his divinity; the other humanizing his gods, incarnating them in the passions as well as the beauty of man, and making them his confidential familiars. The one reposing in the shadow of his god-derived monarchs; the other pressing his instinct of personal freedom to the extreme bounds of turbulent democracy. In short, to the one the present was

the dream, the future the reality; while to the other the future was the land of shadows, the present was the life of real and most intense activity.

The spontaneous and indigenous development of Grecian freedom, literature, philosophy, and art, and the relative perfection to which they were carried, render Greek civilization the most marvelous phenomenon in the progress of humanity. Purely intellectual and artistic development could be carried no further; they have been teachers of all subsequent times, they imparted a regenerating impulse to the European mind, and their history is an abiding prophecy of modern politics. There was in the Grecian spirit a consciousness that history was providential, that there were eternal laws of justice which governed its events, and it was their philosophy which led to the all-important truth that reason cannot err, however much reasoning may, even by offending against reason itself.

When Grecian nature could no longer develop itself in the extreme personal freedom of the individual, it succumbed to the fate which overwhelmed it, and that fate it found in the mighty Roman. By a wonderful disposition of Providence that very limitation of the individual, which was the downfall of the Greek genius, was the ground from which sprang, in the Roman, a new and energetic phase in the history of the world. The personal freedom, the very individuality of the Roman was rooted ineradicably in the being of the state. Aristocracy and democracy in Greece were self-rending factions; in Rome they were fundamental principles, antagonistic it is true, but organic principles in the life of the state, whose very antagonism wrought out that homogeneous, self-balanced, and lawful liberty which was the glory and strength of

the old commonwealth and the foundation of her invincible power. Her long and fruitful discipline in settling rights between patrician and plebs trained her for her grand mission of giving law to the world. The sanctity of his relation to the state inspired the Roman with that profound conviction of duty, with those sublime instances of self-sacrifice, and with that undoubting faith in his appointed work, which enabled him calmly to face disaster, to look down upon the pomp of kings, and, amid all of his faults and cruelties, to deserve the gratitude of the world, for his very conquests were made in the spirit of civilization. And that civilization, spread by his arms and enlightened by his civil law, was the noble type which Christianity took hold of, and strove to impress with the divine characteristics of peace on earth and good will to men.

When we turn to the Germanic nations, the commingling of peoples and the various movements in the development of their civilization become vastly complex. Unlike the Greek and Roman, those northern nations received from without the impulse toward the path which they pursued in developing their civilization. It was from the ruins of the Roman empire that they appropriated the elements of their culture, their laws, and their religion. But these were received into a noble soil, in which an instinctive feeling of the dignity and worth of the individual as man, and an active spirit of freedom, were already indigenous. These elements were gradually moulded into new forms of Christian nations; and while in the east the degenerate Byzantine representative of the olden civilization, thoroughly corrupted and effete, was sinking to its inevitable doom, these nations in the west were preparing for the manifestation of a spirit more comprehensive and universal

in its conceptions and aims than the world had ever yet witnessed. The Church contributed to this result by that bond whereby out of diverse nations one Christendom was created. But the Church, in subduing the world to her authority, became herself thoroughly worldly; and there was a long period of corruption, struggles, and reactions before western humanity emerged in all its mighty vitality in modern Europe. The reaction against the centralization of the Charlemagnic empire upon its breaking up—the good origin, the subsequent tyranny, and the decay of the feudal system, the incalculably powerful impulse of the reformation, are some of the indications of that movement of mind by which God was developing the plan of history.

While these western sons of the Arians were thus receiving their education a remarkable phenomenon appeared among a Semitic people in the rise of Mohammedanism. It rapidly reached its fullest bloom, and became corrupt. Its basis was too narrow to make it the religion of universal civilization; but it did carry a certain civilization and higher religion to pagan peoples, and it furnishes an ever memorable example of what an earnest, energetic, and active faith in one great idea can enable a nation to accomplish.

We now see humanity in western Europe at the highest point of development which it has ever reached. In Germany and France the horizon of intellectual freedom in science, learning, criticism, and philosophy has been immeasurably enlarged; and the whole history of England is that of the progress of constitutional liberty. Powerful as has been the influence of Christianity upon national forms, if its effects do not seem to be commensurate with the progress of nations in other respects it is because Christianity deals with the spiritual nature of individual men; its

true kingdom is invisible; it has its real confessors who, through fidelity to its spirit, have been morally martyrized by bigotry and fanaticism, even in free Christian lands, where the material fires of persecution are no longer in vogue. But we believe that its divine spirit will yet triumph over evil and ignorance, and lead humanity into that spiritual liberty with which God intends that it shall be free.

Regarding humanity as an organic whole, prossessing one intelligence, allotted in different phases and degrees to nations as to individuals, we deduce from a historical analysis made in the spirit which we have endeavored to indicate what is the idea of man which is being realized in human history. It is that of a being gradually developing increasing freedom of thought, politics, art, and religion; or, in other words, human nature coming, under the guidance of a divine plan, to fuller and fuller consciousness of its inherent free powers.

We may trace, then, the following lines of development in the plan of universal history, the deep current of which Providence has been steadily carrying on, notwithstanding the eddies and seeming retrogressions which have appeared upon the surface from time to time; these have been owing to that free will of man which is necessary for the development of his history, but the great plan has ever steadily flowed on. We may trace, as tending to certain specific ends,

The evolution, through the various stages and forms of dialects, of the unity of the phenomena of Language;

The evolution of the Religious Idea, from the ground of a feeling of subjection to, and dependence upon, suprahuman powers, and the unfolding of the innate ground of

moral obligation, as the basis of the possibility of any appeal from revelation;

The evolution of the idea of Political Organization and of the state from the ground of the family and the social instincts;

The evolution of the constructive and imaginative capacities through the expression of Art;

The evolution of the fundamental categories of Thought, in its endeavors to comprehend and solve the problem of the Universe, manifested through the history of philosophy.

The different nations are found manifesting various degrees of approximation to these ends, as they have been gradually evolved in the consciousness of humanity; and all of these ends are contributing to, and harmonized and included in, the higher end of a civilization the culmination of which points to the brotherhood of nations, in the bonds of religion, commerce, lawful liberty, and peace.

Toward this goal the historical nations have ever been striving, each unconsciously contributing to the idea of progressive civilization. And until those capacities of man which can only be worked out in this sphere have reached their goal we cannot say that his destiny on earth is accomplished; but it becomes our solemn duty, as nations and as individuals, to perform with fidelity whatever mission is allotted to us toward the fulfilment of that destiny. How dare we despair of humanity, when its development is the unfolding of the idea of God in history? We may be faithless and recreant to our trust; but the divine ideas are efficient laws, which, in their inevitable march toward fulfilment, will bless and save us if we be willing instruments and co-operators, or will crush and annihilate us if we madly and impiously attempt to arrest them.

Movement is the great law of the universe. We per-

ceive it in the ceaseless courses of the heavenly bodies; in the remotest depths of space there is no sign of immobility. Upon the inorganic matter of our own planet there are ever-operating mechanical forces in activity, elevating or depressing continents, moving the unresting flow of the ocean's tides, grinding down by imperceptible but steady power the seemingly eternal granite of the enduring mountains, and urging in perpetual flux and transition every atom of material phenomena. In the organic kingdoms again, movement and evolution are the law and condition of life and development—no longer mechanical, but dynamic powers, manifesting themselves in vegetable and animal growth, and unfolding in each the unity of a general, comprehensive idea through various successive special types. So in humanity, as the material through which they work, the same laws of movement and evolution are gradually unfolding, through special types of nations, the capacities of man, as he comes, in various stages, to a consciousness of the powers with which he is endowed. In certain outgrowths of this common humanity we find it exhibiting but the dawning of those moral and intellectual potentialities which lie deeply embosomed in the common nature of man; and so far only does the mission of such rude peoples extend. In others, we find in the structure of their dialects an advanced consciousness of those mysterious powers of language which are implanted in humanity, and a higher conception of social, political, and moral life; while they stop at this phase, it not being given them to exhibit further that many-sided idea of man which can only be unfolded in the ages and evolutions of nations. Some races, having developed their allotted original phase, are destined to receive further elements of culture from, and under the direction of, races of superior powers, or to

wane and disappear before the higher and more potent type of human capacity. In others, we find humanity evolving in still fuller consciousness those latent powers which had been obscurely working to light, and contributing toward the possibility and realization of civilization in its most comprehensive signification; while others, finally, have assimilated, as it were, new nourishment from the fruitful deposit of the labors and contributions of their predecessors, and opened still larger conceptions of the nature and destiny of man. Gathering up all these various manifestations of history they impress us with irresistible force as pointing to the unity of one idea and one plan. Development and progress are inseparable from this idea; they are the necessary conditions of vitality; when they cease, stagnation and death ensue; when they cease for a nation, its course is run; when they are accomplished for man, he will have fulfilled the mission which God has allotted to him upon earth.

In this conception of history no people have existed wholly without a meaning; the rude carvings of the savage islander upon his oar or club, like the rudimentary, undeveloped organ in certain stages of animal organization, was a type and prophecy of future development in the unity of a plan — it was the humble indication of those mental conceptions which displayed themselves in the full bloom and glory of Grecian art. And not only have no people existed without a meaning, but no national movement has been without deeper signification than its merely national aspect; the dreadful portent of the old French Revolution was not a mere godless outbreak, the result of a false philosophy in religion, morals, and politics, however much this may have had to do in shaping its course; it was the cry and struggle, though dark and blind, yet the cry and

struggle of the truest instincts of humanity, for light and relief, against the unnatural and intolerable oppression of a faithlessness, falsehood, corruption, and abuse, which contemned and mocked all that is sacred in human nature. Providence has given in that revolution a lesson to rulers and people which may yet prove prophetic with respect to those who are too blind to read it aright.

If it is now our privilege, by the light of past history, to perceive and trace a divine plan—to see that no nation can live only for itself—how greatly does this fact increase our responsibilities, by pressing upon us the conviction that we, too, have our mission to perform. And how much stricter an account may be exacted of us, since it is ours, not blindly, but consciously to act for the blessing or curse of humanity.

The United States started upon their career with the greatest advantages which had ever been accorded to any people. They started from the basis of advanced civilization, they had the example and lessons of all past history, they had a political training in their colonial growth, and they inherited an invaluable system of law and constitutional principles from their mother country. The development of the boundless resources of a new continent invited their energies, and commerce courted their sails with every breeze. With Law and Freedom as their watchword, they were looked to as the refuge of the oppressed, the home of civil and religious liberty, the political hope of the ends of the earth. And yet they have ignominiously failed, as every attempt to preserve free institutions must fail when unscrupulous selfishness supplants justice and equity, and demagogism makes a mockery of virtue and statesmanship. Our Confederacy enters into the great drama of history possessing as its large inheritance all with which

the old Union commenced its career, and with the terrible lesson of its failure besides. To presume to say that, if we also fail, the hope of human liberty, of constitutional freedom, is but a despairing dream would be blasphemy against Providence, as though in its infinite armory it possessed no other instruments for realizing what it has implied in the idea of man. But in that idea is implied the attainment of such freedom; and we may well and reverently ponder whether we are not entrusted with the furtherance of it. If our struggle is only for a selfish independence, in which, when we shall have achieved it, we are to act over again among ourselves the old history of the struggle of sectional parties for power, then we are inevitably destined to further disruption, if not civil war. But if we are true to ourselves, if we are not blind to the indications of Providence, we have the glorious, but awfully responsible mission of exhibiting to the world that supremest effort of humanity — the foundation of a political organization, in which the freedom of every member is the result of law, is preserved by justice, is harmonized by the true relations of labor and capital, and is sanctified by the divine spirit of Christianity.

It is a truism — but truisms are the embodiment of universal truth — that man can only develop all of his capacities in the organism of the state. But states grow out of the characteristics and exigencies of a people; every attempt to form them artificially has proved a failure; no constitution given from without — which has not grown organically as the embodiment of the political spirit and wants of the nation — can possess vitality; and it is therefore as shallow as it is unphilosophical and ignoring of the hand of Providence to say, in great developments and revolutions of people, that we would have this event otherwise,

or that constitution regulated according to our notions of the best or strongest government for the times. Providence, by its inevitable laws, working through nations, regulates these things; and it is our duty in such times to perform faithfully the part allotted to us, without a doubt that Providence is accomplishing that which is most agreeable to its all-seeing plan. Doubtless we may have wished the accomplishment of our desires without the dreadful throes and pangs of revolution; but the law of antagonism is inexorable in nature. Nothing noble, nothing enduring, comes to birth without struggle and conflict. But this antagonism is, for man, an antagonism against evil. It is the setting up of his selfish will as his centre which is the root of moral evil. In the language of that lamented scholar and philosopher, the late Mr. Bunsen, "this free will gives man the awful power of appropriating to self what is God's; of substituting his self-interest and pride for the ideas of what is good, and just, and true. By being allowed to realize this power, which realization is *the* evil and *the* sin, his conscience tells him that he is self-responsible . . . Thus free will includes necessarily the power of not following the will of God and the dictates of conscience and enlightened reason, but of acting according to that negation of the divine will potentially contained in self. By divine necessity, what is the origin of evil becomes the impelling power of development in universal history. Evil exists only through man, but it exists as the condition of his free agency, and of the realization of the divine mind in finite nature." These words of the clear-sighted philosopher suggest a key to many seeming anomalies in history. When nations or individuals violate those eternal principles of right which Providence has implanted as a witness in the conscience of humanity they must suffer the penalty,

although their violent and selfish courses are overruled to the furtherance of the divine plans. History and biography are so pregnant with this truth that it would require a volume to condense the illustrations which they afford. It is as true of nations as of individuals, that through trials, tribulations, conflicts, antagonism, their virtue is evoked and their faith is perfected. But if national trials do not awaken in a people a reliance upon Providence, and an exhibition of truthfulness, justice, virtue and humanity, they may become the prey of the most abject degradation and the most vulgar tyranny.

That man is made not a machine, but a responsible being, is a noble prerogative, because it invests him with the sacred attribute of the freedom of his will; but that very attribute is made by Providence the instrument of working out the plan of history. A great destiny is offered to our Confederacy; we may accept it, and become a glory among the nations, or we may refuse it, and be made a warning example to the ages to come. According to our national characteristics will be our place in history, and every individual is contributing to these. We have the past to guide us; we have the future, to a certain extent, in our hands. We have a great lesson to teach the world with respect to the relation of races: that certain races are permanently inferior in their capacities to others, and that the African who is intrusted to our care can only reach the amount of civilization and development of which he is capable—can only contribute to the benefit of humanity in the position in which God has placed him among us. In developing and exchanging our peculiar agricultural resources we have a mission of peace and benefaction to the world. In developing our intellectual resources we have a basis to lay for liberal education, untrammelled by the dic-

tation of government, untainted by the prejudices of fanaticism, not enfeebled by the shallowness of a pretended encyclopædic knowledge, nor cramped by servile and ignorant adherence to exploded errors, but based upon the solid results of true learning and consecrated by the principles of undefiled religion. Above all, we have the responsibility of showing that virtue and justice are essential elements in the capacity for self-government. If such is our mission, and we fulfil it with fidelity as a Christian people, then the history of our Confederacy will be another great chapter in the theodicy of nations, justifying the ways of Providence to man.

GENTLEMEN OF THE GRADUATING CLASS:

Contemplating history as the evolution in time of the divine idea of humanity, we find the Deity making all races, whatever may be their diversity of origin, of one nature, having determined the particular times of their migrations and appearance in the drama of history, and the bounds of their appointed habitations, that, in their respective order and sphere, they should progressively develop the nature and destiny of man. But as the free-will of the individual has been the instrument of working out this plan, we find an infinite complexity in the movements and actions of nations, and in the particular phases of human nature which they have manifested, while we can still trace the general and consistent evolution of the ideas of art, science, politics, and religion. While we thus discover a plan, involving a goal toward which civilization is tending by inevitable laws which man can neither resist nor control, laws which are necessitating the realization of

all that is potential in the idea of man, we find at the same time that, in the sphere of moral freedom, nations stamp their own character for glory or infamy upon the records of history. And in this sphere we find Divine Providence dealing with them as moral agents, giving them blessing and prosperity in proportion to their fidelity to truth, justice, right, and humanity; or, while overruling their actions in subservience to the general plan, suffering them to become the self-punished victims of their own follies and crimes. In thus contemplating God in history from this twofold point of view, as working out through man an inevitable plan, and as dealing with human actions according to the immutable law of right, we derive a ground of confidence as to the future of a nation and an incentive to duty as to our individual responsibility. The world combined cannot deprive a nation of its destined place in history and of the lesson which it will teach; but upon us, as citizens and individuals, rests a great responsibility as to what that place and lesson shall be. Nothing true, just, faithful, and earnest has ever existed in vain; and these are qualities which, by God's help, it is the prerogative of even the humblest to cultivate. The inexorable law of Providence, making human agents the instruments of his plan, despite their own intentions, has already been made conspicuous in our own history; for how little did our present foes conceive that, in the years of selfish, unscrupulous aggression upon the constitutional rights and equality of the South, they were actually forcing on the birth of a new and independent nation. As to the dealing of Providence with those foes and with ourselves, as responsible free agents, that lies yet in the undeveloped future; but this, at least, we may lay seriously to heart, as most certain truth, that any people among whom the hour

of national trial develops at once a deep seated social and political corruption—a system of falsehood and avarice, which sweeps within its contaminating vortex even those who ought to be the representatives and guardians of truth and justice, which suddenly paralyzes all sense of dignity, self-respect, and true liberty—such a people bear within themselves the seeds of inevitable retribution. Let us ponder upon these truths, take warning, be humble, and be wise—wise with that truest wisdom which is the offspring of Christian virtue.

If our country is, as we believe her to be, commissioned by God to contend for and illustrate great principles, intimately connected with the progress of humanity, what is it to her if the world should now misunderstand her mission, and seal against her its sympathies? It is not success, it is fidelity to those principles, which will ennoble her in that grand scroll of history which God is unrolling through the ages, emblazoned with the record of His plan. In that record a thousand years are but as yesterday; and that same inexorable time, which crumbles the material pomp of empires, inscribes the ineffaceable and unerring verdict of the character and worth of nations. What are the glories of the Asiastic empires, stained with unredeemed cruelties, to the light, and lessons, and kindling associations which encircle the names of Judea, Greece, and Rome? But that God who, working through history makes it so grand, calls us individually to battle in a field where He stands ready to help us, and where, if we repel Him not, the victory is certain. That field is within us; that battle is with self, with all that is unworthy, and degrading, and unholy. However obscure, however isolated we may be, there is no escaping that conflict if we be not sunk in the illusion of a dream, and if there has ever been

kindled in us one aspiration for a true and noble life. There we need no spectators, no human applause, no external antagonists to triumph over; each conqueror there, though a beggar, is a crowned king, and, though buffetted by the ephemeral despite and troubles of the world, basks in the serenity of a conscience reconciled with duty and glowing with that peace of God which passeth understanding.

About to enter as you are upon life, in the midst of events still so much involved in the turbulence of revolution as to render it difficult for us to estimate fully what may be the magnitude of their influence upon future history, it appeared to me that I could select no theme more appropriate for the present occasion than the one to which your attention has been invited. For although the subject has been barely sketched in rudest and most imperfect outline, yet what reflections can more worthily occupy us at a time like this than those which tend to impress upon us the truth that human history is no mass of arbitrary, disorganized events, but that amid the most stormy convulsions and the fiercest ebullitions of human passion there is a Divine Providence directing with steady and intelligent hand the development of its plan, and making that plan subservient to the cause of humanity. With this conviction, it would be impiety to despair in the darkest hour of our country's trial, and in the hour of her success we will feel a more solemn sense of duty as instruments for accomplishing her divinely-appointed mission. And amid the bitter trials with which this war has afflicted us, it may be regarded as one ground of resignation that they have been no arbitrary inflictions of mere Omnipotent will, but the necessary results of the wise law whereby God is working out our destiny. But the same God in

history is the God in the consolations of religion, and these point to a future home without grief—the abode of love, and purity, and peace. There is no feature of this war more heart-rending than the sacrifices it has exacted of youthful life and the gaps which it has made in the family circle. True, that holy bond around the hearth must, under any circumstances, gradually be dissolved. It is the most sacred and beautiful of earthly ties, but it may be transfigured to a sublimer relationship in heaven.

Fair faces beaming round the household hearth,
Young joyous tones in melody of mirth,
The sire doubly living in his boy,
And she, the crown of all that wealth of joy;
These make the home like some sweet lyre, given
To sound on earth the harmonies of heaven.

A sudden discord breaks the swelling strain,
One chord has snapped; the harmony again
Subdued and slower moves, but never more
Can pour the same glad music as of yore;
Less and less full the strains successive wake,
Chord after chord must break—and break—and break;
Until on earth the lyre dumb and riven
Finds all its chords restrung to loftier notes in heaven.

To that supreme Source of consolation, and strength, and wisdom would I finally point you, and may He so guide your course in life that you may prove an honor to the institution which is about to send you forth, a consolation and pride to your friends, worthy servants of your country, and may be welcomed at the last with the approving "well done" of your God.